

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
September 28, 2005, 4:30 p.m. Council Chambers

PRESENT

Cindy Felsten
Ian Kohen
Greg Lewis
Jay Myers
Gil Palmer
John Roberts
Wes Roy
Marie Schroeder

ABSENT

Chrystal Pushor
Jason Staley
Barbara Stevens

Vice-chairperson Myers called the meeting to order.

STAFF PRESENT:

Director Arlette Tinsley, Deputy Director Lorraine Smith, Secretary Lula Young.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Commissioner Schroeder called roll and the minutes were reviewed. **Commissioner Kohen moved to accept the minutes of the regular full commission meeting of May 25, 2005. Commissioner Felsten seconded. Motion carried.**

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Commissioner Felsten reported the sale of two oral history videos. The month-end balance is \$6,199.02.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Chairperson Palmer issued a welcome to John Roberts and Greg Lewis as new Commissioners and initiated the introductions of standing commissioners. The new Commissioners were encouraged to get involved in ongoing Commission events and activities.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Tinsley applauded the City Council's continued use of the application process for the selection of new Human Rights Commissioners for the opportunity it provided for community members and welcomed the new Commissioners.

Director Tinsley shared information on the Technical Assistance Program Seminar provided by the EEOC Training Institute that she attended with Deputy Director Smith and Commissioner Stevens. The Cultural Competency training co-sponsored with the Mayor's

Cultural Awareness Committee and facilitated by Tatiana Kolovou was well-attended by city and school officials.

Director Tinsley informed Commissioners that she is on the Safety Committee for Taylorsville Elementary and the BCSC Anti-Bullying Task Force at the request of Karen Garrity. Additional training requests have been received from the Center for Teaching & Learning for the summer 2006 Teacher's Academy. A Jennings County Middle School teacher who had participated in the 2005 Summer Academy, requested assistance with the anti-bullying training for their school as the State Department of Education could not schedule their corporation until 2006. Director Tinsley referred her to Karen Garrity regarding the IDOE training scheduled in Columbus in October.

Technical assistance was provided to a local school in obtaining transportation for approximately 30 ESL students to introduce and educate them about the Columbus community. Mayor Armstrong and police Lt. Rudy Olivo spoke with the students at the Visitor's Center. Lt. Olivo is creating a pilot program with police officers mentoring Latino students that are experiencing trouble in the schools.

OPEN FORUM

ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT:

Commissioner Roberts stated that an area that may not have been considered is academic bullying. Students in high-achieving courses have a way of making other students feel less of a human being. Emphasis on the ISTEP and exit exams, create an environment for academic bullying. He stated that there is a need to adopt a proactive approach to address the teachers to insure that the student's who are not the high achievers, still feel valued and guard them against the academic bullying because of the tracking that is being done. Commissioner Lewis agreed and noted the changes being implemented by the Indiana Department of Education (I. D. O. E.) Director Tinsley shared data from multiple studies that show that the people at risk of being bullied are ESL students, youths with disabilities – physical and learning - and any child that is small in stature. The studies also show that adults identify more closely with the bully than the victim.

Commissioner Myers inquired if any staff member had enrolled in the current Leadership Bartholomew County class. Director Tinsley informed him that due to personal time constraints, no one was available to participate.

COMMUNITY BOOK READ TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Director Tinsley advised Commissioners of Warren Baumgart's request to Deputy Director Smith for technical assistance after receiving complaints from local Native American community members. Partners In Education (P. I. E.) sponsors, Bartholomew County Library, Columbus Area Arts Council, Ivy Tech, I.U.P.U.C. and the Senior Center, selected the book. Deputy Director Smith and Director Tinsley made a recommendation to meet with Native American members and offer them a separate P.I.E. sponsored event to discuss the issues they have identified in the book.

Chairperson Palmer, Vice-chairperson Myers, Director Tinsley and Deputy Director Smith met with Debra Haza and Debbie Hammond and clarified CHRC's technical assistance protocol. Ms. Haza and Ms. Hammond did request a letter be written on their behalf requesting the director of the C.A.A.C. (Columbus Area Arts Council) meet with them to discuss future opportunities for the Native American community.

ACTION ITEM/2006 BUDGET:

Director Tinsley provided copies of the budget for Commissioners to review. Chairperson Palmer addressed the intent to have the Commission's Director on a comparable salary level as other department heads within the city and asked Commissioners to begin considering the issue for the 2007 budget. Commissioner Felsten informed Commissioners of a Pay-Equity Seminar for the legislators in January 2006.

Commissioner Kohen moved to accept the 2006 Budget, Commissioner Roberts seconded, motion carried.

ANNUAL DINNER/ESSAY CONTEST:

Director Tinsley provided Commissioners with an update regarding the communication with Tavis Smiley advising him of the potential of foundation support and our willingness to work around other speaking engagements in the area. Commissioners supported a maximum of \$20.00 per ticket but not higher.

Speaker alternatives were discussed if an agreement is not reached with Tavis Smiley within thirty days. Other potential speakers included the female Lt. Colonel in Brownsburg, IN on the role of women in combat; a Native American speaker that is the executive director of a children's museum; and Monica Kaufman, anchor of Channel 2 Action News, Atlanta. Commissioner preference is to keep tickets affordable for community members.

Commissioner Lewis moved for adjournment, Commissioner Schroeder seconded. Meeting adjourned.